

Pokemon Mystery Dungeon: Rescue Team Reclaimer

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Summary: Waking up in a new world, with a new body, Chief must find a way back to the UNSC, while simultaneously working to save the world he finds himself in.

1. Forward Unto Dawn

The screech of warping metal and roar of fiery blasts of energy clawed at Master Chief's ears as he gripped the steering wheel of the Warthog, speeding along the Ark's solar arrays towards the Forward Unto Dawn. All around him explosions ripped through the platforms as he and the Arbiter sped along towards their goal. _So close..._ Chief thought as the Dawn loomed in his vision.

Suddenly Cortana's voice frantically screamed through the speakers in his helmet "90 percent Chief, firing sequence initiated!"

"Hurry Spartan!" The Arbiter roared from his position on the Warthog's turret. "I do not wish to die here!"

"I know." Chief answered in his usual gruff monotone. "Just focus on keeping those Sentinels off our backs." There was no response, other than the roar of the Warthog's chain gun as the Arbiter continued to rain metal fire on the pursuing Sentinels.

Finally the _Dawn_ came into view at the end of a downward slope of panels... plus a large gap, below which lay the Ark's rapidly expanding core.

Cortana's tense voice once again rang through Chief's head, exclaiming "Now Chief, Floor it! Right into the Hangar!"

Chief pressed the Warthog's gas pedal into the floor, causing it to lurch forward, gaining speed as it hurtled down the ramp towards the _Dawn_. "Hang on to something." Chief calmly warned the Arbiter as he steered the Warthog toward the panel that would send them flying into

the _Dawn's_ Hangar. The Arbiter responded with a nod, before releasing the chain gun's controls and wrapping his arms around its base, hanging on for dear life as the Warthog hit the ramp and launched into the air, soaring towards the hangar of the enormous frigate.

The Warthog careened into the _Dawn's_ hangar, before tipping onto one wheel and flipping wildly into the opposite wall.

Chief pushed himself up from his prone position on the floor and looked over to the Arbiter to see him do the same. Suddenly an explosion caused the _Dawn_ to lurch to one side, sending a Scorpion tank careening towards the Arbiter. The Sangheili's eyes widened as he turned and sprinted away from the 73 tons of steel rolling towards him, vaulting over a crate in his way, and diving behind a group of containers seconds before the tank collided with them.

Leaping to his feet, Chief looked over to the stacked crates to find the Arbiter emerging from behind them. Chief nodded towards the Arbiter, who returned the gesture, before turning towards the console in the center of the Hangar, while the Arbiter turned and began racing toward the frigate's bridge.

Upon reaching the console, Chief quickly yanked Cortana's chip out of his helmet before plugging it into the console, with Cortana's familiar blue-and-purple avatar appearing seconds later. "Hang on!" Cortana proclaimed as she activated the _Dawn's_ thrusters, sending the ship out of the Ark's atmosphere and into the vacuum of space, as the Ark's core began pulsing ever larger, threatening to swallow the _Dawn_ entirely.

Chief clung to the console desperately as both the _Dawn's_ acceleration and the decompression of the hangar threatened to rip him into the voids of space. Reaching up to gain better leverage on the console's panel, Chief looked up to find a Warthog hurtling towards him, seconds before it impacted on his helmet and sent him tumbling towards the hangar's open entrance.

Meters before he would have been sucked into the blackness of space, Chief slammed his fist into the metal plating of the deck, leaving a sizable dent and allowing him to gain a handhold, abruptly stopping his fall and wrenching his shoulder painfully.

Looking up, Chief ducked down again as the same tank that had nearly crushed the Arbiter was sent sailing over where his head had been a moment before. "Chief!" Cortana cried, fruitlessly reaching out towards her protector, as he began a slow climb back to the console, lifting himself up to meet his artificial companion...

****Meanwhile the Arbiter had reached the bridge, and quickly seated himself in the Captain's chair, resisting the G forces as the
Dawn**** accelerated away from the Ark, but unable to outrun the shockwave generated as the Ark fired, destroying itself in the process.****

Chief was sitting up against the console, using it to brace himself from the vacuum, as the blast from the Ark's detonation rushed to meet them. "In case we don't make it..." Cortana began. "We'll make it." Chief said confidently. Cortana continued, with a newfound hope in her tone. "...It's been an honor serving with you John." With

that, Chief rested his head against the console, as a blinding light engulfed his vision.

2. Evaluation

Darkness. Darkness had replaced the blinding light that had encompassed Chief's vision, and with it came the sensation of every one of his senses going numb. Sounds were muted, and his body lost all sense of feeling. For the longest time, he simply remained there, floating as an incorporeal entity in an endless black abyss. Then, all at once his vision returned, and with it, an explosion of light and color that threatened to overwhelm him. Mentally grunting as his eyes burned at the sudden effort needed to process their new surroundings, Chief blinked rapidly, and slowly allowed his throbbing headache to subside. When it did, Chief allowed himself to take in his surroundings.

Color. That was what Chief saw before him. Nothing but a massive swirling expanse of color. Reds, Blues, Yellows, and a million other colors all wavered and mixed in front of him, their soft motions both soothing and sickening as he struggled to follow them. Chief raised a hand to his helmet, or tried to at least, before realizing that not only could he not feel his helmet, but he was unable to feel his own arm. Nevertheless, he inquired, "Cortana. Cortana are you there? Cortana, come in." Getting no response, Chief felt himself tense. Wherever he was, he had been separated from his AI companion, and as of now his first order of business was getting her back. Looking around himself however, Chief admitted that he had no idea as to how he could accomplish that.

Maybe I could help you out there. The sudden response sent Chief's instincts into overdrive, and he immediately began whipping his gaze around, searching desperately for any sign of the speaker. After a few seconds of this however, he found no trace of whatever had spoken. _If you're trying to find me, I'm afraid you won't have much luck, John._

Chief's mind ground to a halt, as his brain struggled to process the voice's use of his name. "Who are you?" He demanded, his voice remaining firm despite his shaken demeanor. "How do you know my name?"

The voice chuckled, it's light, playful tone breaking into a fitting series of giggles. _Oh, I know a lot about you, Master Chief Petty Officer SPARTAN John-117 of the UNSC. In fact, it was what I knew about you that led to me choosing you._ Again Chief's mind struggled to comprehend who this voice belonged to and what connection its owner had to him. Finding none, Chief felt his confusion give way to frustration.

"You will tell me everything you know right now, or I promise I'll make you regret it." Chief said, his voice dropping into a growl that would and had left even a Sangheili cowering in fear. For a moment, the voice was silent, as it mulled over this request. Then, to Chief's shock, it began bursting with laughter. For a solid minute, the voice simply giggled and guffawed at Chief, who clenched his nonexistent fists and buried his growing anger as best he could.

Finally, the voice seemed to regain control of itself, as it responded, _Y-you seriously think that you can make demands of me? Listen Chief, I get that where you come from you're a big goddamn hero, but right now? You're like a Caterpie to a Wailord, okay? For your sake, just treat me like you would a superior officer, and we won't have any problem._

Confused by the voice's words and irritated by its superior attitude, Chief gave no response, and the voice continued, _I'll make this easier for everyone and assume your stony silence means yes. Anyway, let's get back on track. Ahem. Hello, and welcome! This is the portal that leads to the world of PokÃ©mon!_

Chief was floored. This voice, whoever it was, sounded like it was some sort of announcer, as it delivered this line in a hammy, over exuberant tone that one might have when talking to a child. Nevertheless, he didn't allow this odd turn of events to distract him from the task at hand. "Where is Cortana?" He said. "What did you do with her?"

The voice sighed audibly. _We'll get to that later. Now where was I? Oh yeah! Now before I can send you on your way into the world of Pokemon, I have a couple questions I need to ask you. I need you to answer them fully and honestly, do you understand?_

Chief naturally felt a great deal of weariness at the voice's words, but admitted that as he couldn't feel his own arms, much less attempt to escape wherever the Hell he was, playing along may give him the opportunity to find out where he was and why he was here. So, after a moment of hesitation, he nodded firmly and said, "I understand. I'll answer your questions, but then I'll have some questions for you, and I'll expect some answers in return."

Chief could almost feel the voice rolling its eyes. _Again with the thinking we're equals? Whatever, fine. Let's just get this over with. Ahem. Question One: A human hand extends out of a toilet! Do you A. Scream and run, B. Close the lid without a word, or C. Shake hands with it?_

For the first time in his life, Chief was silent, not out of choice, but because he was simply struck dumb at the question presented to him. After a few moments of working his jaw listlessly, he managed to sputter, "What kind of question is that?"

The voice sighed again. _Look, I didn't write this, okay? I just ask the questions. Now I'm gonna need an answer, Spartan._

Chief sighed, muttering darkly to himself. "Just when I thought the strange part was over!" Looking up again, he answered, "I guess I'd choose B."

The voice seemed satisfied as it continued, _Good. Moving on, here's question 2: Do you dream of lounging around idly without much excitement?_

Chief fought the urge to scoff at the question. It was a simple one really, at least for a Spartan. They were trained from the start to fulfill their duty to the UNSC, and were happiest doing just that. Any time spent idle was seen as wasted in Chief's opinion. So, satisfied with his reasoning, he simply answered, "No."

Very good. The voice said, sounding contemplative. _Personally I agree with your reasoning. It's always good to keep yourself busy, but remember that going too long without an idle moment can lead to unnecessary weight upon your person. You might want to consider taking a moment to rest once in a while._

Again Chief found himself perturbed by the voice's words. "Wait, how did you know what my reasoning is? Were you reading my thoughts?"

Because I can read your thoughts, and yes. That's two, questions I answered for you, so here's another one of my own! Don't worry though, this next one is easy. Question 3: Do you ever fall asleep without noticing?

"Never." Chief said simply. It was almost impossible for SPARTANs to pass out, and Chief could count on one hand the number of times he had done so, even counting the times he was knocked unconscious or drugged. His thoughts went back to when he had resisted the sedatives while receiving his augmentations, and how it had taken Dr. Halsey coming in and convincing him to submit to them that they finally worked.

Clearly reading his thoughts again, the voice said, _Ah yes, those augmentations were certainly interesting. Too bad that they will be wasted._

Chief felt a surge of panic shoot through him as he asked, "What do you mean 'wasted?'"

The voice tutted, _Ah, ah, ah! Not your turn! Next question!_ Chief opened his mouth to argue, but the voice cut him off. _Question 4: There is an alien invasion! What will you do?_

For a moment, Chief sputtered again, dumbfounded by the pointlessness of the question. Finally, he answered, "I would fight. If you know anything about me, why bother asking me that?"

The voice was silent for a moment, but Chief got the sense that it was grinning. _Ah yes, but what if you never were a SPARTAN? I want you to answer the question based on the assumption that you never were taken by the UNSC, and that you were raised as an everyday, average kid._

Chief was silent for a moment as he contemplated the answer. Finally, he shook his head. "It's impossible for me to answer that question. I don't know what a normal life would be like. All I've ever known is my life as a SPARTAN. I wouldn't know whether I would fight or not, but I like to think so."

The voice again was silent, and Chief now received the impression that it was nodding. _A wise answer. We never truly do know our destiny, I suppose. Especially given that it is these events in our lives that shape us, and make us into the people we are destined to become. However, I too would like to believe that you would gallantly fight against these aliens. Which leads me to question 6: You are defeated, but you have gained the aliens' respect. You are offered a choice to either rule alongside them, or be destroyed. What do you do?_

Chief immediately thought of the Prophets, and considered what his reaction would be if they had offered this choice. He scoffed. "I would spit on their offer, and fight to my last breath. I wouldn't forgive myself for doing otherwise."

The voice chuckled. _Yeah, I figured that. And good for you on your choice, that shows an undying loyalty to your cause, something that many can admire. However, do your best to keep yourself from being blinded by your loyalty. If you truly believe in your goals, you would do well to make sure that others do not pervert them with the intention of manipulating you. Your Sangheili friends learned this lesson the hard way._

Chief nodded in agreement, before asking, "You mentioned that my augmentations would be wasted earlier. What did you mean by that? I want details."

The voice's answer was evasive. _It is nothing to act too worried about. Your augmentations are nothing compared to the potential power I am bestowing upon you. You want details, but I'm afraid I have none to give. Simply find comfort in the fact that it is nothing to remain concerned about._ Chief frowned uncertainly, but before he could press the issue further the voice continued, _These next few questions require some thought, so think them through carefully before answering. Question 8: A friend is in danger, but in order to save them, many others must be endangered in their place. Your friend is scared for their life, but they understand that they may have to be sacrificed for the greater good. Do you sacrifice your friend in order to save the others, or forsake the majority and instead focus on saving your friend?_

Chief contemplated the question for a moment, arguing with himself over the 'right' answer, versus what he would choose when faced with this decision. Every military instinct he had told him that the choice was obvious, and that he should focus on saving as many people as possible. However, he couldn't help but think back to Sergeant Johnson, and the choice that Halsey had presented him then_. I couldn't sacrifice Johnson._ Chief thought._ It would have potentially saved hundreds from the Flood, but when the time cameâ€¦ I saved him._ Chief's thoughts then turned to Cortana. To the message she had left him.

Would you sacrifice me to complete your mission?

_ Would you watch me die?_

"No." Chief whispered. "I wouldn'tâ€¦ I couldn't." He said nothing more, and he was thankful when the voice seemed satisfied by this answer.

This speaks a lot to your character. The voice said pensively. _You are dedicated to the greater good, there's no doubting that. But when it comes down to it, you don't want to be responsible for the death of those you hold close to you. Understandable, but you would do well to remember that sometimes, you won't have a choice in the matter._

Chief said nothing. Truth be told, he agreed with the voice, and deep down, that possibility terrified him. He had seen enough of his

friends die. He thought back to Cortana's words, said to Captain Keyes. _This war has enough dead heroes._ It pained him to say it, but when it came to his own allies, he was more than reluctant to sacrifice them for the greater good. Maybe it was the last thing about himself he considered to be truly human.

While Chief mulled this over, the voice continued, its voice now more subdued. _Well, now we've moved on to the last two questions. Number 9: What is it that truly defines us? What quality of our person, our Strength, our Bravery, our Intelligence, which is the one that gives us our own identity?_

Chief mulled the answer over in his head for a while, before soon enough, an answer presented itself. "There is no one trait that truly defines usâ€¦ It is only the combination of these traits that decides who we are."

The voice gave a hearty laugh, and as it spoke, its voice was filled with admiration. _Well said, Spartan. Very insightful. To be honest, you didn't strike me as being so philosophical. Personally, I believe you are right. However, while a combination of traits determines who we are, there always exists that one trait, that one special thing about a person that seems to shape their entire personality. This leads me to the final question: What is yours, John? What trait do you consider to be your defining aspect, by which you are most well-known?_

Chief suppressed an involuntary snarl at the use of his real name, but nevertheless turned his focus towards the question. His first thought was of course, his strength, his indomitable might that allowed him to fight against the Covenant, and earn the title of 'Demon' amongst their ranks. He was about to say as much, when another thought entered his mind. A long-forgotten conversation.

They let me pick, did I ever tell you that? Choose whichever Spartan I wanted.

You know me. I did my research, watched as you became the soldier we needed you to be.

Like the others, you were strong, and swift, and brave. A natural leader.

But you had something the others didn't, something no one saw but meâ€¦

Can you guess?

"Luck." Chief said simply. The voice paused, as if prompting him to elaborate, but Chief offered nothing more.

Eventually the voice spoke, its voice full of confusion. _That's it? Luck?__** That's **__your defining trait?_ Chief shrugged simply, and the voice huffed, before saying, _If you say so. The Test is over, I have all the information I need. Now I'm going to tell you the results. Then, you're going to continue on to the world of Pokemon!_

Chief frowned. "There's that word again. What is Pokemon?"

The voice chuckled again. _All in due time, Spartan. Are you ready to hear the results?_

Chief nodded. "I'm ready." He said simply.

The voice took a deep breath, and said, _Very well. John, you appear to be the stoic type. You are very good at hiding your thoughts and feelings from others, and while this has given you an edge in many encounters, it alienates you from your fellows more often than not. It has also prevented others from reading your emotions, therefore you have become very adept at hiding them. This control may have benefitted you greatly throughout your life, it has also made you unstable. Not many can go as long as you have without letting out their emotions, and no one is successful in bottling them up forever. Eventually, all of your emotions, both good and bad, will be released. I only hope that I'm at a safe distance when they do._

The voice laughed at this, and even Chief felt himself smile, but it quickly devolved into a frown as he realized that the voice was right. He thought back to a lesson he had once learned from CPO Mendez during training: _Compartmentalization is a Hell of a thing, and it's only when it finally fails that you realize how well it was working._

The voice continued. _Furthermore, you're very dedicated. You cannot accept failure, and while this drive to win can make you unyielding in your resolve, it can also cause you to be unnecessarily ruthless. Before, you fought for the survival of Humanity, while disregarding the fact that your so-called 'Humanity' was being slowly but surely lost. The creation of the SPARTANS is a prime example of this._

Chief felt his anger flare again, as his mind brought up a million arguments against the voice's own. Flashes of debates similar to this one, from people who saw the Spartans as monsters, as ONI-spawned freaks of nature, appeared in Chief's mind. But, like always, he drove the anger away, reigning in his frustration in favor of calm professionalism. This allowed him to listen as the voice continued its speech. _Lastly, you are unflinchingly loyal. When your trust is gained, you will do anything to protect whomever has earned it. Of course, this makes you naturally slow to trust others, and if you are betrayed, it cuts deep. You will do well to remember that everyone is in their own way flawed, and being betrayed is for most people an inevitability, and while it is fair to seek compensation for old wounds, you must also give them the opportunity to heal._ The voice finished its diatribe, and Chief was again left alone with his thoughts.

At first, Chief simply mulled over everything the voice had said, struggling to hold back the many emotions that welled up inside him as a result. Anger, shock, and surprisingly, acceptance. No matter how indignant Chief may have been at the voice bearing his soul for them both to see, he couldn't argue that many of the voice's observations made sense. They described him perfectly, and if there was something more rage-inducing than that, Chief had no idea what it could be.

Suddenly, the voice spoke up again. _Alright! With your personality in mind, I think I have finally decided!_

"Decided on what?" Chief asked uncertainly, a sense of dread growing within him.

Why, your new form, of course! The voice answered cheerily.
Anyway, I've kept you here for too long. Brace yourself, and maybe I'll see you on the other side!

Master Chief Petty Officer SPARTAN-117 opened his mouth in an attempt to halt the voice, but he was too late, as the colors immediately faded and his vision was engulfed in darkness.

3. Awakening

Chief's mind was reduced to a hazy mess, as he drifted in and out of consciousness. Eventually however, Chief's disciplined mind managed to get a hold on itself, and he was able to process a few precious thoughts. _Where am I?_ He wondered. _The last I remembered I was in the Dawn, with Cortanaâ€¦ What happened?_

A pleasant breeze wafted against Chief's skin, and he shifted slightly at the feeling of grass tickling his back. _Okay, so I'm not in my MJOLNIR Armor. _Chief thought. _â€¦Perfect._

Suddenly, Chief was aware of a voice, barely at the edge of his consciousness. It was unfamiliar, but Chief was able to make out it saying, "Hello? Wake up! C'mon, wake up already!"

Slowly, Chief opened his eyes, before clenching them tight again as the bright sunlight threatened to blind him. Opening his eyes again, slowly this time, Chief began to take in his surroundings. As he suspected, he was on his back, staring straight up into the sky. The sky was perfectly clear, without a single cloud visible, and the sun appearing just off to his left, almost hidden in the tree line that bordered the edge of his vision on all sides. Immediately, Chief realized that he was in a forest, specifically a clearing.

Then, from somewhere ahead of him, he heard the same voice from before saying, "Hey, you're awake! Good thing, I was getting' worried!" Upon hearing the voice, Chief's eyes snapped fully open and he didn't hesitate in leaping to his feet. As he took a fighting stance, he noted that his balance felt off, but quickly disregarded it, simply attributing it to his recent awakening. Of course, any thought as to why his balance may be off was abandoned as Chief finally took in the sight of the creature before him.

Standing before Chief was what could only be called a small, bipedal blue crocodile. It was short, only reaching Chief's waist at the most. Its head was massive in proportion to its body, easily the same size or bigger, and was dominated by an enormous jaw. Though it had its mouth closed in a polite yet awkward smile, Chief could still make out two gleaming fangs poking out from either side of its jaw. Two eyes were set above its snout, and were locked upon him, as their red irises glowed with wary curiosity. Around each eye, a smaller patch of darker blue circled it, giving the appearance of mascara. On its chest it bore two yellow patches, stretching from its shoulders to meet at the center of its torso, forming a wide V. From his elevated position granted by his height over the creature, Chief was able to see that it had three red triangular spines protruding from

its back. It also had two short, stubby arms that terminated in five-fingered claws, and large feet that ended in three flat-topped toes. Finally, from the base of its spine grew a short tail, with a single spike similar to those on its back marking it near the tip.

The creature then opened its mouth and, to Chief's utter amazement, began to speak. "You feelin' okay, mister? I found you passed out here and I was worried sick!" Chief could only gawp openly in surprise, as his augmented mind struggled to comprehend the sight before him. The creature seemed to notice his confusion as it continued, "Um, hello? I've never met a Scyther, but I'm pretty sure they can speak. Maybe you're not okay." It raised a hand and curled in three of its digits, before waving the extended ones in Chief's face. "How many claws am I holding up?"

Finally, Chief found his voice as he took a step back, tightening his stance before growling, "What the Hell are you?"

The creature took a step back as well, looking anxious. Then, its fear seemed to give way to annoyance as it stood tall and answered, "I'm a Totodile, and my name is Felix. So _Scyther_, do you have a name or what?"

There's that word againâ€¦|_ Chief thought. "What's a Scyther?" He asked.

The creature, _Felix_, Chief reminded himself, settled back as it raised a brow skeptically. "Uh, yeah, you're definitely not alright. I should have known; you were unconscious, and I've heard that that's _really_ bad for you. Can you remember _anything_?"

Chief scowled. "I can remember plenty. I just want to know why you-" Chief's response was cut off as he pointed at the Totodile, only to freeze as he spotted what exactly he was using to point. Rather than the human hand Chief had expected, Chief was gesturing to Felix with what could only be described as a large blade. It was long and curved, with a small spike growing from the center. Chief stared dumbly at the limb for a few moments, before lifting his other arm, discovering that it was likewise transformed.

For a moment, Chief stood there stock-still, as his thoughts raced, searching futilely for an explanation for this bizarre metamorphosis. Instead, his thoughts became focused on how far the rest of his body had been mutated. Instinctively, Chief discovered an overpowering urge to find the nearest reflective surface, and his eyes immediately locked on a nearby pond. Rushing over to it, Chief stumbled slightly as his new and unfamiliar limbs made themselves known. Eventually though, Chief reached the edge of the pond and gazed upon his reflection.

What met his gaze was something entirely alien.

Chief's attention was immediately drawn to the most obvious change: his face. Chief's entire head had been reshaped, the familiar oblong form of a human head instead replaced with a triangular visage. His mouth was now set at the bottom of the triangle, reduced to a thin line, with two fangs poking over the bottom lip similar to those of the Totodile. Just above that, two small holes set into his new snout were all that remained of his nose. His eyes, now far larger than

before, sported slitted pupils surrounded by a golden iris that matched that of his helmet's visor. The eyes themselves were set into harsh, angled sockets that gave him the appearance of a constant scowl. Atop his head, three short spikes formed a small ridge almost similar to a crown. Most disturbingly, the entirety of it was sheathed in a reflective emerald exoskeleton, whose color was notably similar to that of his MJOLNIR Armor.

Moving down, Chief took in the rest of his body. Like his head, almost all of his body was covered in the same green exoskeleton, save for a small section on his waist, legs, and each arm, where the respective areas thinned out considerably and were instead colored a sickly yellow. Chief's chest too sported a section of yellow near his neckline. His waist had shrunk to the point that his body was essentially divided into three sections, like an insect. His chest was circular and compact, and partially guarded by the large bulbous spheres that made up his shoulders. The spheres were large, yet maneuverable, with three spikes protruding from the backs of each one, overall giving the impression that he was still wearing shoulder pauldrons. Chief felt his gaze instinctively shy away from the massive blades that had replaced his arms, and instead continued his examination on the rest of his form.

Moving on to his lower body, Chief saw that after the segmentation that took place at his waist, his abdomen had inflated to match that of an insect's, featuring the same ringed pattern one would find on an ant's.

His legs, meanwhile, were similarly altered, attached to his abdomen in a similar fashion to his shoulders, featuring jagged teardrop shapes like those that formed his shoulders. Below that, his legs thinned considerably into the pinched, yellow colored sections of his thighs, up until his knees. From there on, his legs were comprised of two gradually-thickening stumps that terminated in round, almost hoof-like feet, and each bearing three silver-colored claws that dug into the ground beneath him every time he shifted his weight. Finally, from his back protruded, of all things, two segmented, sharp-edged wings. As Chief noticed these additions, he felt previously nonexistent muscles on his back twitch, and they fluttered rapidly.

Slowly, Chief backed away from the pool, his mind reeling from the implications of this transformation. Whatever he was, it definitely wasn't human. Chief searched his memories, trying desperately to locate what could possibly be the source of this metamorphosis, but found nothing. He felt his pulse begin to race, and did his best to calm his nearly fractured nerves. Years of training and experience did little to prepare him for something like this, but nevertheless he managed to bring himself to a relatively tranquil state.

"Uh, mister? Are you okay?" The sudden voice from behind him drew Chief's attention back towards Felix, who was staring at him with obvious concern. "You seemâ€¦ surprised. Were you expecting something else?"

Chief glanced back to his reflection and muttered, "Something like that." Focusing his attention back on the Totodile, he said, "I am definitely lost. Do you know where I can find the nearest settlement?"

Felix frowned, a bit put off by Chief's sudden shift in demeanor, but shrugged it off. Whoever this was, he mused, he seemed confused, and at the very least he hadn't attacked him yet. So, jerking a thumb over his shoulder, he responded, "Well, Pokémon Square is the only real town around here. I can take you there, if you want."

Chief nodded appreciatively. "Thank you. Lead the way." Felix nodded and turned, before beginning to march towards a path in the forest. Chief looked down at his blades again, and sighed, before moving to follow.

Unfortunately, before either of them had reached the trail, a loud cry reached their ears. Turning towards its source, Chief felt his eyes widen at the sight of what was swiftly approaching them.

A first glance immediately made Chief think of a massive butterfly. Its body was roughly the size of Felix's, and was made up of an oblong center and a round head, both colored purple. Its hands and feet, as well as a rather bulbous snout, were colored a soft greenish-blue. Its eyes were large and clearly compound in the style of an insect's. From the bottom of its snout two small teeth poked through. Atop its head sat two long antennae, which were currently flitting about in its panic. Most importantly though, were its wings. Its wings were massive, easily one and a half the size of its body, and sported black and white colors in a pattern reminiscent of a monarch. As the butterfly drew closer, Chief saw that its giant eyes were soaked with tears, and its blubbering cries became clear.

"Please! Please someone help me! My baby, my sweet little Caterpie is trapped!" The butterfly cried in a feminine, motherly tone. The butterfly drew level with Chief and Felix and began floating between them.

Stepping forward, Felix said, "Butterfree? What's wrong? Did something happen to Caterpie?"

The butterfly, now identified as Butterfree, answered, "Y-Yes! A huge fissure opened in the ground, and my Caterpie fell in! The fissure must led to a large cavern, but when I went in, wild Pokémon attacked me!"

Felix looked shocked at this news, while Chief cocked his head in mild confusion. _Pokémon_ He thought. _Why is that word so familiarâ€|?_

Meanwhile, Felix pressed Butterfree for more information. "Why would other Pokémon attack you?" He asked, his expression concerned.

Butterfree hiccupped once before she answered, "The fissure, it must have sent them into a rage. At least, that's what I think." Her voice broke again as she added, "Oh, my poor little baby is down there with those brutes! What if they hurt him?" Butterfree was again reduced to sobs from this thought, becoming incoherent in her woe.

Felix however, stepped forward, his hands settling confidently on his hips as he said, "Don't worry Butterfree, I won't let Caterpie get hurt! I'll go save him!" He turned and was about to start off in the direction from which Butterfree had arrived, but was stopped as Chief

extended a blade in his path.

"Wait a minute." Chief said, his voice remaining firm despite Felix's expectant glare. "I need to reach a settlement, and I need you to lead me there."

Felix scoffed. "Are you kidding? We need to help Caterpie! I'll help you after we've saved him. You can come with me and help, or you can wait here, but I'm not leaving Caterpie alone in that fissure." With that, he ducked under Chief's blade, marching off towards where Butterfree had appeared. Chief watched him depart, and looked to Butterfree. Seeing that the sobbing mother would be no help to him in her state, Chief sighed, and followed the Totodile.

As Chief drew level with Felix, he saw the Totodile flash him a grateful smile, and soon enough they were marching at an equal pace. After a minute of walking, Felix decided to break the silence by saying, "I appreciate the help, mister. Uh, do you have a name?"

"Master Chief Petty Officer Sierra-117." Chief deadpanned. Felix gave him a blank stare, and Chief sighed before adding, "Just call me Master Chief."

Felix smiled. "Okay, Master Chief. Like I said, I'm Felix." He hesitated for a moment, then added, "So, what was up earlier? You seemed pretty out of it. Are you sure you're alright?"

"I'm fine." Chief said quickly. Feeling Felix's skeptical gaze upon him, he sighed and continued, "I was just a bit confused."

Felix still appeared uncertain, but said nothing more on the matter. Instead, he said, "So, where are you from?"

"Far away." Chief said curtly. Looking down at Felix, he asked, "Do you have a plan for when we reach this fissure?"

Felix shrugged. "I think we should just keep it loose, y'know? We go in quick, and maybe we can take them by-WOAH!" Felix was cut off as the ground suddenly disappeared from beneath him. Flailing wildly, he grabbed the nearest thing, which happened to be Chief's leg. Still growing used to his new body's balance, Chief was unable to properly compensate for the sudden shift in weight and pitched forward, following Felix as the two descended quickly into the fissure.

One rough tumble and a two harsh landings later, the pair found themselves at the bottom of the rift, in a large cavern. Groaning, Chief slowly pushed himself to his feet. Beside him, Felix picked his head up from the ground and groaned, "Surprise."

4. Rescue

Chief grunted, pushing himself to his feet and sending a pointed look towards Felix, as the Totodile staggered to his feet. Felix looked to Chief with an embarrassed smile, and the two looked away from each other in favor of examining their new surroundings.

They appeared to have fallen into a large cave, easily big enough to fit both of them. Behind them, a large slope led back up to the

fissure, where sunlight could be seen peeking through. Oddly enough, despite the limited lighting available, the cavern was bathed in a soft light that made visibility a nonissue. Ahead of them, they could see a large but narrow tunnel leading out of the room. Chief scanned the rest of the area, but other than the slope behind him and the tunnel ahead, it appeared to be empty. There was certainly no sign of Caterpie.

Chief looked to Felix. "He must have gone into that tunnel." He said, pointing ahead. "He couldn't climb up, so he tried finding another way out."

Felix nodded. "We'll need to go in after him. If he found a way out, then we can too. If not, we'll be able to lead him back here." Looking back at the slope, he added, "I think we'd be able to climb this."

As long as one of us doesn't trip. Chief thought inwardly. To Felix, he nodded and proceeded forward, leading the way into the tunnel. Due to its narrow proportions, the pair was forced to proceed single-file. Thankfully though, the same inexplicable light filled the tunnel, allowing Chief to easily see the path ahead.

For a few minutes, the two simply marched on in silence, until finally Chief was able to see an opening in the tunnel ahead of them. Chief stepped through and into another large room, similar to the one they had found near the entrance. Unlike the previous cavern however, this one was already occupied.

Immediately after entering the cavern Chief heard an avian squawk of fury, and turned just in time to feel a sharp pain erupt in his chest. Staggering backwards, Chief raised his blades to form a rudimentary shield, and took in the sight of his attacker.

Standing before Chief and squawking furiously, was a large bird. It was roughly the size of a chicken, and colored a mix of browns and tans. It clacked its pink beak sharply and flared its wings, before lifting into the air and flying towards Chief. Readyng himself, Chief dug in his heels and waited until the bird was almost upon him, before twisting sharply, dodging out of the way and allowing it to shoot past him. As the bird drew level with him, Chief raised one of his blades before bringing it down sharply onto the bird's back. The quick strike slashed into the bird's closest wing and sheared off a cluster of feathers, as the sudden hit caused the bird to lose control, sending it crashing to the ground.

Not wasting a moment, Chief rushed forward, swiftly approaching the downed bird and lashing out one foot in a hash kick as it attempted to recover. Chief's foot slammed hard into the bird's chest, sending it flying back to slam headfirst into a nearby wall. It flopped to the floor, its eyes swirling dazedly, before slumping over, unconscious.

Panting heavily, Chief fought the urge to wince as each breath sent a jagged spike of pain through his chest. Looking down, Chief was surprised to find that the exoskeleton on his chest now sported a large spider web crack. The wound was painful, but thankfully seemed to be superficial, and Chief was quickly able to banish the pain to the corners of his awareness. Behind him, he heard Felix approaching, and looked around to find him staring at him in awe.

"That was amazing!" Felix said, looking from Chief to the downed bird. "When I saw that Pidgey hit you, I thought you were really in trouble! But then you just waited for him to charge you and _wham!_" Felix punched the air excitedly. "That was awesome!" Chief cocked a brow at the Totodile's childish excitement, and Felix quailed embarrassedly. "Uh, right, sorry. Are you okay? That looks like it hurts." He said concernedly, pointing to Chief's chest.

Chief waved him off. "I'm fine." Looking away to observe the rest of the cavern, he saw that again, there was only one other tunnel leading out of the room. Pointing to it, he said, "We should keep moving."

Felix nodded, then looked to the Pidgey lying unconscious against the opposite wall. Gesturing to it, he asked, "What about him?"

Striding over to the Pidgey, Chief nudged him with a foot. The Pidgey gave no response, but the soft rise and fall of its chest told Chief that it was still breathing. Despite this, Chief could tell the Pidgey would be unconscious for quite a while. Looking to Felix, Chief said, "He'll live. Let's move." Felix nodded, and followed Chief as he proceeded towards the next tunnel, glancing back to the Pidgey with a look of concern.

Again they marched through the tunnel, soon enough coming across another room. This one too, contained its own inhabitant, one that caused Chief to stop and stare in confusion.

"What is that?" Chief whispered, gesturing to the form before him. Lying on its back ahead of them, was what looked like a massive seed, colored with brown and yellow stripes and sporting a small two-leaved sprout atop its head. What drew Chief's attention, however, was that it had a face. A wide mouth and two enormous eyes took up a majority of the seed's surface, and gave it an eerily human-like appearance.

Thankfully, the creature appeared to be asleep, and was snoring peacefully. Felix did his best to remain quiet as he answered, "It's a Sunkern. A grass-type, I think. We should probably sneak around it, right?"

Chief nodded as he looked past the Sunkern and towards the opposite side of the room, and mentally cursed. Rather than a single tunnel found in the previous rooms, the opposite wall diverged into two separate pathways. Chief looked from one to the other, before looking back to Felix. "The right one is farther from the Sunkern. If this thing was here when Caterpie came this way, then he probably took the one that was farthest from it." Felix nodded, agreeing with his reasoning, before moving forward, taking the lead.

As the two carefully approached around the sleeping Sunkern, Felix attempted to step around it. Unfortunately, at that moment the sound of rustling feathers could be heard, as from the tunnel on the right another Pidgey flew into the room. It cawed loudly, before diving after the closest target, Felix. As Felix dove to avoid the Pidgey's attack, he fell backwards, and directly on top of the Sunkern. The two fell into a pile of Pok  mon as the Pidgey swooped higher above the group. Turning its gaze to Chief, the Pidgey fell into another dive, aiming at the Spartan with a narrowed gaze. Chief raised his

blades, readying a counterattack, when suddenly the Pidgey stopped, hovering in place. It flapped its wings rapidly, and suddenly Chief felt a powerful breeze crash into him. With an almost unnatural strength, the Gust lifted him off his feet, slamming him backwards into the wall of the cave.

Felix meanwhile had recovered from the fall and hopped to his feet. Unfortunately, the Sunkern had also recovered from its rude awakening, and was now glaring at him as it furiously hopped in place. Gathering its strength, the Sunkern leapt at Felix, Tackling him and sending him sprawling. Rolling to his feet, Felix watched as the Sunkern began hopping forward again, closing in for another hit. Snarling, Felix locked gazes with the Sunkern and fixed it with an angry Leer. The Sunkern faltered slightly from Felix's intimidating gaze, and Felix took the opportunity to charge forward, swiping at the Sunkern with his claws. Felix's short claws were surprisingly effective in carving five deep Scratches in the Sunkern's hide. The Sunkern screeched in pain, bouncing backwards in an attempt to avoid the next hit. Felix advanced upon the Sunkern, smiling smugly, and prepared another strike. Suddenly however, the Sunkern grinned evilly before a large, green blob erupted from the sprout atop its head, slamming into Felix and sending him staggering back.

As Chief gasped from the shock of impacting the harsh stone at such a high speed, the Pidgey attempted to capitalize on its opportunity by diving after Chief with the intent to run him through on its beak. 'Attempted' being the operative word, as Chief recovered from the hit and at the last moment twisted to the side. Moving too fast to halt its progress, the Pidgey blasted past him and directly into the wall. A soft crunch was heard as the Pidgey flattened itself against the wall. As the Pidgey slumped to the floor, Chief prepared to finish it with another swipe of his blades. However, just as he was about to bring his arm down, the Pidgey brought one of its talons forward, swiping a cloud of sand up and into Chief's eyes. Clenching his eyes shut instinctively, Chief brought his blade down too far right, where it impacted in the dirt harmlessly. The Pidgey took this chance to lunge forward in an attempt to jab Chief with its beak, but Chief managed to bring one of his blades up to parry the blow before it could land. Backpedaling quickly, Chief brought the blunt end of one of his blades to his eyes in an attempt to wipe his eyes clean. Unfortunately, the awkward shape proved ineffective, and Chief was forced to cope with blurred vision as the Pidgey moved upon him again.

Felix collapsed to his hands and knees as the attack sapped him of his strength, draining him of his energy and feeding it into the Sunkern, all the while burning him like he had been doused in acid. Through his wavering vision, Felix could see the Sunkern smirking as the wounds on its front seemed to heal before his eyes, quickly becoming small marks only a fraction as deep as they had been previously. Stumbling to his feet, Felix backed away from the Sunkern, who continued to approach him, readying another attack. Suddenly, he felt his back bump into something hard and, twisting around, he spotted Chief working desperately to parry the Pidgey's rapid blows, despite the fact that his eyes were red and bloodshot.

As Chief continued to parry the Pidgey's continuing assault, he thankfully managed to blink away most of the sand, leaving his eyes stinging, but clear. Suddenly, he felt his foot bump into something.

Unfortunately he was unable to turn to discover what it was, lest he allow the Pidgey to land a decisive hit. As he deflected one strike from the Pidgey, Chief lashed out with his other blade, forcing the Pidgey to duck to avoid it. Expecting this reaction, Chief then brought his leg up, slamming it into the Pidgey and kicking it away from him.

Now given some breathing room, he turned to find Felix, panting heavily, and the Sunkern approaching him. "How's your fight going?" Felix gasped. "Because so far mine sucks!"

Before Chief could muster a response, a cry from each of their respective opponents drew their attention away from each other, and they braced themselves to fight. Thinking quickly, Chief barked at Felix, "Switch! Now!"

Obeying immediately, Felix turned toward the Pidgey while Chief simultaneously turns towards Sunkern, just as they each released their respective attacks. Chief raised his blades to catch the Absorb, which splashed harmlessly against the surface of his blades with little effect. Chief smirked as the Sunkern tensed nervously. Lowering his blades Chief simply took a few steps before lashing out with one foot, lifting the Sunkern into the air with a short kick, and following it up by slashing down sharply with one of his blades. The blade slammed into the center of the Sunkern's mass, causing it to slam into the ground with enough force to bounce twice, before landing in a heap. It gave a soft sound of defeat, before falling unconscious.

Felix meanwhile met Pidgey's attack with a quick Scratch to the face. The Pidgey shrieked in pain and stumbled back, allowing Felix to leap forward and slam his shoulder into its chest. The Pidgey was flung into the air before collapsing in a heap several feet away. The Pidgey struggled to pull itself to its feet before its wounds overwhelmed it and it sank to the floor, out cold.

As the dust settled on their respective encounters, Chief and Felix allowed themselves a moment to relax. Felix panted, swaying on the spot. Chief took a moment to whip the slime from his blades with a few short swipes. Looking to Felix, he felt his expression warp into one of concern. The Totodile looked like he was about a minute from keeling over. Stepping over to him, Chief said, "You took some hits there. Are you going to be okay?"

Felix nodded resolutely. "I'm fine, I'm fine. Those guys are gonna have to try harder to beat me!" Trudging over to the tunnel Pidgey had emerged from, he added, "We should keep going. Caterpie can't be much farther!"

Chief frowned after Felix's retreating form, but after a moment shrugged it off. If worse comes to worst, Chief was confident he could defend them both. With each passing minute, he felt himself growing more confident in his new body's movements.

The two continued on, following the tunnel when a loud wail ahead of them drew their attention. Focusing on the sound, Chief quickly was able to identify it as the sound of a small child crying. Looking to Felix, he saw that the Totodile's thoughts seemed to mirror his own. "That must be Caterpie!" He said, quickening his pace into a sprint. "Come on, let's hurry!" Felix tore down the tunnel towards the source

of the noise, while Chief followed close behind.

Within moments, they burst forth into another chamber. This room was unique in that like the cavern in which they had entered, it featured a large crevice in the ceiling, allowing sunlight to spill through and douse the room in golden light. However, Chief's attention was focused on the scene before him.

If Chief had to guess, the small creature resembling a caterpillar had to be Caterpie, but unfortunately, he was not alone. Another bird, similar to the Pidgey but much larger and with a more pronounced crest, was currently bearing down on the child as he wriggled as far away as possible.

"You made a mistake comin' down here, little bug." The bird said, using its sharp tongue to lick its beak expectantly. "This is our turf, so now you're free game. Lucky that I found you; I was getting' kinda hungry." The Caterpie recoiled, quivering as its tail finally met the wall. The small bug curled into as small a ball as possible, weeping noisily as it waited for its end to come.

Before the bird could move to finish Caterpie, Felix charged forward. Chief reached out to stop him, hoping to catch the bird by surprise. He was too late however, to keep Felix from shouting, "Hey, Pidgeotto! Leave Caterpie alone!"

The bird, Pidgeotto, looked up with a glare. "Who's this?" He demanded, his feathers ruffling in displeasure. "More intruders? Coming into my home, making more holes in my roof? I'll deal with you, once I've finished my little morsel here!"

Deciding that the element of surprise was thoroughly lost, Chief stepped forward. "Step away from the child." He ordered, drawing level with Felix. "Let him go now, or you'll wish you'd never found him."

Pidgeotto gave a bark of laughter. "You think that you can beat me?" He stepped away from the cowering Caterpie and towards the duo. "I'm the boss down here! I was strong, and I kept my head! Not like the others, going crazy, going feral. No, I'm still perfect, and I won't let you ruin it for me!"

Chief had no idea what the crazy bird was babbling about, but frankly he didn't care. The Pidgeotto was in the way of him completing his objective, and like all obstacles, he would be removed. So, settling into a fighting stance, Chief readied his blades, as Felix likewise braced himself beside him. "It's over Pidgeotto!" Felix growled. "We're not leaving here without Caterpie!"

"Then you can die with him!" Pidgeotto screeched, before taking to the air. Felix and Chief braced themselves as Pidgeotto sent a Gust towards them. Felix hunched against the gale while Chief was forced to dig his blades into the dirt to avoid getting blown away. Immediately after the wind had passed, Chief leapt into action, rushing forward and swinging one blade in a wide arc towards Pidgeotto. The bird ducked down to avoid the attack, giving an opportunity for Felix to move in, swiping at him with his claws. Pidgeotto squawked as Felix dug three small Scratches into Pidgeotto's side, before lunging forward, driving his beak hard into Felix's chest. The Totodile was knocked off balance from the attack,

and fell back, wincing in pain.

Pidgeotto prepared to press his attack on Felix when out of the corner of his eye he spotted Chief swinging a blade towards him. Reacting quickly, Pidgeotto turned and, putting on a burst of speed, launched himself into Chief, leaving a glowing white contrail behind him. He slammed into Chief, forcing the air from Chief's lungs and causing him to stagger back. Fighting through the pain and ignoring the sense of breathlessness the blow had left him with, Chief struck back, lashing out with one blade and carving a short gash across Pidgeotto's side.

Releasing a cry, Pidgeotto flew up and launched another Gust towards Chief who, unprepared for the attack, was thrown off his feet to impact the wall harshly. Pidgeotto prepared to dive down and attack Chief again, when suddenly he felt a burst of pain as a rock smashed into his wounded side. Squawking loudly, Pidgeotto turned to face its source as he fought to stay in the air, coming face to face with Felix. The strike had forced Pidgeotto into losing enough altitude for Felix to land another blow with his claws. Shying back from the blow, Pidgeotto watched as a large burst of energy seemed to come from Felix, as the Totodile was wrapped in an orange aura. Paying no mind to this, Pidgeotto lashed forward with another Peck. Rather than dodge the strike, Totodile simply matched the blow with a charge of his own, and as the attack slammed into his chest, rather than wince in pain, the Totodile merely snarled, as the fire in his eyes surged with power.

Cocking a fist back, Felix punched Pidgeotto with all his strength. Pidgeotto fell back, as stars erupted in his vision. When it finally cleared, Pidgeotto found himself stumbling straight into an oncoming flash of green. A moment later, and Chief's roundhouse kick slammed into Pidgeotto's beak, cracking it and sending him head over heels, to come to a rest several feet away, where he lay still.

A moment passed as the two conscious fighters remained in combat poses, panting heavily and wincing as their breaths brought forth new waves of pain from their wounds. Chief was the first to relax, looking down to see that the crack in his chest's exoskeleton had nearly doubled in size. Some sections had been completely torn off, revealing raw green muscle beneath, and causing emerald blood to leak from the wound. Thankfully though, it didn't appear to be debilitating, as it caused each breath to burn like fire, but otherwise left him unhindered.

Felix meanwhile wasn't in much better shape. The Pecks to his chest had thankfully failed to pierce the hard surface of his scales, but left large, swollen bruises where they had struck, turning a majority of the yellow 'V' on his chest a sickly orange. He clutched his chest, wheezing as his bruised ribs throbbed with every move he made.

Thankfully though, while they were far from minor, their wounds did little to hinder them as they turned away from Pidgeotto's unconscious form to face Caterpie. The battle had frightened the child greatly, and it had curled into a tiny ball as it lay there, sniffing. Smiling gently, Felix approached him, bending over and gently laying a claw against his side. Caterpie flinched away at his touch, and Felix said in a comforting tone, "It's okay, little guy. The mean old Pidgeotto isn't gonna hurt you anymore. We beat him, and

now we gotta get you home to your momma, okay?"

"M-Momma?" Caterpie whimpered, uncurling slightly to look at Felix. The Totodile smiled warmly, and Caterpie relaxed as he saw the bird's prone form laying across the room. "Y-You came t-to bring me back to m-momma?" Caterpie asked, his quivering voice carrying a hopeful tone.

Felix nodded. "That's right. Now how about we get you out of here?" Caterpie nodded, and jumped into Felix's outstretched arms, chattering its grateful praise of the two. Chuckling, Felix turned and beamed at Chief, who gave a small smile in return. Turning toward the slope at the back of the room, Felix said, "We can climb this to get back up to Butterfree."

Chief shook his head. "Bad idea. We don't know where this leads. We should go back and exit through the way we came in."

Felix's expression quirked into a knowing grin. "Don't worry, Chief. If I'm right, then that won't be a problem. C'mon!" Before Chief could answer, Felix stepped over to the slope and began a slow ascent, as Caterpie clung tightly to him. Chief paused, uncertain, and looked back down the tunnel. He was tempted to force Felix to stop and follow his lead, but the Totodile's confidence in the matter made him hesitate. Chief realized that he was a good leader, and if he wanted Felix to follow him he would need to take charge. However, at the moment, it was clear that Felix at the very least appeared to understand the situation better than himself, and Chief knew enough not to ignore the input of those better informed than him.

He would teach Felix not to withhold information on him later, but for the moment he would take a leap of faith and follow the Totodile's lead. So, despite his misgivings, Chief found himself climbing the slope alongside Felix, and soon enough, they emerged into the bright sunlight. Looking around, Chief saw that they were still in the forest that he had woken up in, and the sun overhead appeared to be closer to the tree line than it had before they had entered the crevice.

To Chief's amazement, Butterfree was there, flitting up to them and accepting Caterpie from Felix's arms. She hugged him close, sobbing happily as she was reunited with her son. For a moment, they simply melted into each other's embrace, sharing their relief that Caterpie had been returned unharmed.

After a while, Butterfree released her child, setting him down beside her to look up at Felix and Chief with a watery gaze. "Thank you." She whispered. "Thank you for saving my baby."

Chief was used to such adoration from civilians and simply nodded in response. Felix however, blushed. "Aw, it was nothing." He said embarrassedly. "We Pok mon have to look out for each other, y'know?"

Butterfree nodded gratefully. "Still, I can't let you heroes go without a reward." Reaching into a pouch at her side, she retrieved three large, fruit-like objects. Handing over the alien shapes to Felix, she said, "I know it's not much, but I'm afraid it's all I have to give. Please accept it with my thanks."

Felix hesitated, but took the offered berries with a smile. Chief watched the exchange with a curious eye. Aside from the usual praise, Chief wasn't used to actual rewards for his service. Still, he wasn't about to complain, and said nothing as Felix thanked Butterfree for her offering. Feeling a pair of eyes upon him, Chief looked to find Caterpie staring at him intently from his place beside his mother. Despite the child's alien appearance, Chief was clearly able to make out the adoration in Caterpie's eyes. Chief met Caterpie's gaze with an expressionless stare of his own. To Chief's surprise Caterpie then giggled, cocking his head to the side in childlike interest. The moment ended when Butterfree gave the two one more teary thanks, before departing, with Caterpie happily in tow.

As they watched the retreating forms of Butterfree and her child, Felix and Chief felt a sense of accomplishment. To Chief, it was surprisingly gratifying. He had saved hundreds of people in danger like this, billions if you counted his efforts stopping Halo and the Flood. Yet for the first time, he felt a satisfaction that came from more than simply doing his duty. The expression in Butterfree and Caterpie's eyes, no matter how strange they may look, carried a sense of gratitude that only a mother reunited with her child could give. The grateful thanks of the many soldiers he had rescued were pleasant, but they didn't quite manage to hold the same amount of weight.

Felix meanwhile, was ecstatic. For the longest time, he had been hoping to perform a rescue expedition, and thanks to the mysterious hands of fate, one had landed right in his lap. The praise and the rewards that he now held in his hands were nothing, compared to the rush he had felt doing good for the helpless. Looking to Chief, he regarded the Scyther with a new sense of respect. Despite his quiet and gruff exterior, he was a remarkably skilled fighter. Felix was almost positive that had Chief not been there to help him, then he would have been defeated, if not killed, long before he came close to reaching Caterpie.

When Butterfree and Caterpie had become mere specks on the horizon, Felix decided to break the satisfied silence. "That was real good work we did." Chief looked down to Felix, who continued, "I couldn't have done it without you. You're pretty good in a fight."

Chief shrugged. "I've had a lot of practice." Felix chuckled, and Chief allowed himself a grin. Then, remembering his previous surprise at seeing Butterfree outside the crevice, he turned to Felix and said, "How did she find us?"

Felix gave Chief a knowing look. "Butterfree? It probably wasn't hard. We never really left."

Chief, now thoroughly confused, asked, "What are you talking about?"

Pointing to the crevice, Felix said, "I think that crevice is the entrance to a Mystery Dungeon."

Chief's bewilderment didn't wane. "I assume you're going to tell me what a Mystery Dungeon is?"

Felix smirked. "I wasn't if you already knew. Is that not the case here?" Chief said nothing, but his firm expression was enough to

answer Felix's query. "Right, sorry. A Mystery Dungeon is a kind of what's the word? Spatial anomaly." Chief arched a brow in interest, and Felix continued. "No one knows where they come from. People think that they're being created from all the natural disasters lately, but nobody's sure. All we know about them is that for whatever reason, they are constantly changing for everyone inside. The chambers, the tunnels, and even the entrance constantly shifts. People enter, and a lot of times, they don't come back out. They often get lost, and go insane from the isolation, turning feral. Soon enough, they don't even think about getting out, they just wander the Dungeons, attacking whatever and whoever they come across. People have ended up lost in them a lot, usually explorers, but also unlucky people and even children."

Chief frowned at that, imagining more unfortunate children like Caterpie, but without him and Felix there to save them. "That's unfortunate." He said, fighting to keep his voice even.

"Yeah." Felix agreed. "It's not all bad though, they've been putting together teams to go out and save them for a while now. They're called Rescue Teams."

"How creative." Chief drawled. He could guess where this was going, and didn't like it one bit. "Which way to the town?"

Felix seemed to visibly deflate, and he responded in a defeated tone, "Right. It's this way." Turning away from Chief, Felix began trudging down the path.

Chief watched him go, doing his best to ignore the guilt he felt at disappointing Felix. _Sorry kid,_ Chief thought, _but I have my priorities. Mission first, and right now that mission is finding a way home._ So, his resolve reaffirmed, Chief moved to follow.

* * *

><p>Author's Note: And here, finally, is Chapter Four! After far too long on hiatus, this story is finally back! I began playing the PMD games again, and my interest in this story was magically renewed. I hope that some of my previous readers may return to this story, and if you do, thank you for your faithfulness! It may not have been worth the wait, but at least you get my attempt at a cool series of fight scenes! Also, thanks to a comment that was critical in the best possible way (Thank you Arcane Howitzer!), I also decided to rewrite the second and third chapters. Anyway, let me know what you think with a review, and I'll do my best to continue writing, hopefully not taking another 9 months to write the next chapter! Peace!<p>

5. Disclosure

Felix and Chief continued through Tiny Woods, as Felix had called it, in a state of relative silence. Relative, because for the entirety of the journey, Felix attempted to start up a conversation. Sadly, Chief was unresponsive, save for the occasional curt reply. Nevertheless, Felix persisted.

"So, uh, how'd you end up knocked out in the middle of the forest, anyway?" Felix asked.

"Don't know." Chief said. Felix sighed wearily, and Chief glanced at him to see him frowning sadly at Chief's brusqueness. Feeling somewhat guilty, Chief mentally rolled his eyes and resignedly added, "Do you live in town?"

Felix visibly perked up at the question, and answered with a smile, "Actually, I live a couple miles away near Rub-a-Dub River." Chief raised an eyebrow, or whatever he had now, in derision at the cutesy name. Felix, however, seemed not to notice as he continued, "I live there with my mom, and-"

"Wait a minute." Chief said, stopping short. Felix halted as well, turning to Chief with a confused look. "Did you just say your mother?"

Felix cocked his head curiously. "Er, yeah. What about her?"

Chief gave Felix a hard stare. "How old are you?"

Felix huffed angrily. "I'm ten. What's it to you?"

Chief sighed, shaking his head. "I wouldn't have taken you with me if I'd known you were so young."

Felix's mouth dropped open in shock. "W-What? But I fought great! I saved your sorry behind more than once!" He sneered, jabbing a claw in Chief's direction.

"You're a child. It wasn't any better for you to have been in danger than it was for Caterpie." Chief responded, looking away.

Felix seemed to inflate slightly as his anger peaked. "I am not a child!" He barked, his voice cracking. Chief gave Felix a flat stare, and he cleared his throat before continuing, in a noticeably forced deeper voice, "I'm old enough to start my own Rescue Team, no matter what you or mom says!" Felix glared hard at Chief for a few seconds, until what he said seemed to catch up to him. "Uh, I meanâ€¦"

Chief silenced him by lifting a blade. "Forget it." He said. "Let's just get to town."

Relieved, Felix scratched the back of his neck embarrassedly. "Uh, right. This way." He said, turning away quickly and continuing towards PokÃ©mon Square. Chief followed close behind, silently regretting having opened his mouth in the first place.

Within a few minutes, Chief finally spotted a building in the distance. Drawing closer, Chief began to take in the details of the structure. It was a short, one-story building, sporting a thatched roof and wooden walls. Facing the road was an arched doorway formed by three small logs, and around the center was a series of windows, each one formed by two crossed bars in the shape of an X. The most obvious trait however, was the fact that the whole structure sat in the center of a small pond, with only a short plank bridge connecting it to the road. Lastly, to the left of the hut stood a short flagpole, with the tattered remnants of a flag flapping in the wind, and a small blue mailbox stood beside the road.

As Chief and Felix finally drew level with the building, Felix pointed with a smile, "That's my dad's old Rescue Team Base." He

explained excitedly. "When I'm a part of my own Rescue Team, I'm gonna use it too!"

Chief scanned the structure with a critical eye. _Not very defensible. _He thought. Then, glancing to the right, he saw a large collection of buildings. "Is that the town?" Chief asked, pointing with a blade.

Following Chief's gesture, Felix smiled and nodded. "Yeah, that's the best part! The base is so close to town, thatâ€¦ hey!" Felix shouted after Chief who, after learning that he had reached his objective, had started off towards town and left Felix behind.

The Totodile sprinted forward, catching up to Chief and glaring at him as he slowed to match his pace. "What's the big idea?" Felix snapped angrily.

"You've led me to town." Chief explained patiently. "You can go home now."

Felix balked, before grinding his teeth and hardening his stare. "So that's it? I led you to town, and you expect me to just leave?" He fumed.

Chief looked to him and raised a brow. "Yes." He stated simply. "Don't you have anything better to do?"

Felix gawped, his jaw working wordlessly, before he threw his hands up in frustration. "Fine! You want me to leave, then I will!" With that, Felix turned, stomping back towards the base. Chief watched him leave, feeling a pang of guilt at being the source of Felix's anger, but quickly buried it. Instead, he faced the town, and continued on his way.

* * *

><p>When Chief finally entered the town, his first impression was underwhelming. The small collection of tents and single-story huts was anything but urban, and reminded him of an Insurrectionist settlement more than an actual town. To his left, he spotted a large tent with a stall out front, being 'manned' by two large bipedal chameleons, one green, and the other purple. Deciding that they would be as good a guide as any, he mentally shrugged and approached the stall.<p>

Upon reaching the tent, the two chameleons visibly perked up, smiling. "Oh, a customer!" The green one said excitedly.

"A new one, too!" The purple one added, his eyes scanning up and down Chief's form. "Welcome to our shop!" The two chimed simultaneously. "How can we help you?"

"I'm not interested in buying." Chief explained quickly, causing the chameleons to wither slightly. "I was hoping for directions around town."

The two smiled again, disappointed, but fully willing to help. "Oh, well we would be happy to help, wouldn't we brother?" Green said, turning to Purple. "That's right brother." Purple replied, before both turned to Chief, again speaking in unison, "What were you

looking for?"

Growing tired of their harmonized chatter, he quickly said, "I'm looking for someone called Whiscash Elder."

Immediately, the two chameleon's eyes widened, and they glanced to each other before answering together, "Why are you looking for Whiscash Elder?"

Chief frowned, glaring at the two. "That's none of your business. Now tell me where to find him." The two brothers shared a glance again, and both turned to Chief again. As they opened their mouths to speak however, Chief held up a blade to stop them. "Wait." He ordered, before pointing his blade at Green. "You answer."

The two chameleons pouted, crossing their arms. However, Green complied, saying, "Head towards the center of town and take a left. He'll be by the pond beneath the waterfall, you can't miss it."

Chief nodded appreciatively. "Thanks." He grunted, before turning and walking towards the Town Square. Within seconds, he was there. However, before proceeding towards the direction Green had indicated, he took a moment to take in his surroundings.

All around him, different Pok  mon milled about the Town Square, sharing idle conversation. To his left, Chief saw what looked to be a large pink bulldog chatting with a frog-like Pok  mon with a large lily pad growing out of its head. Across the square, what looked like a large jungle cat with a jewel set in its forehead manned a counter while chatting with a strange creature with a body composed of roots and leaves, and a head shaped like a bell, carrying a small bag. As Chief watched, the plant Pok  mon hefted the bag onto the counter, spilling a handful of gold coins everywhere. The cat eyed him angrily, and the plant began quivering nervously.

Satisfied with his examinations, Chief turned to the left, following the path as it led to the base of a large waterfall. The path finally ended with a short walkway leading to the center of a small pond. Chief took in the peaceful surroundings, walking out to the platform in the middle of the pond and looking around. To his annoyance, he found there to be no one in sight. _Those lizards must have sent me to the wrong place._ He thought, preparing to leave.

As he turned to head back to Town Square, however, he was stopped by an aged voice asking, "Something you need, son?" Starting slightly, Chief turned back around to face the pond, and fighting the urge to gape at the sight before him.

Floating on the surface of the water was what could only be described as a large fish. It was massive, easily larger than Chief himself, and colored a deep blue. Its face featured large, widely spaced eyes, with a strange yellow 'W' shape set in between them, as well as a large mouth with lighter-colored lips. From its position in the water below him, Chief was able to see that on its back was a small fin similar in shade to its lips, and marked with black spots. Lastly, Chief's attention was drawn to two whip-like feelers that sprouted from the sides of its face like a prehensile moustache, twisting about in time with the fish's movements.

As Chief took in these details, the fish chose to speak again. "Welcome to Waterfall Pond, my friend." It said, its voice calm and even. "Have you come to seek my counsel?"

Chief recovered quickly, nodding. "You're Whiscash Elder?" He asked.

The fish chuckled, nodding its head slowly. "That is what many call me, but I never preferred the title." Whiscash explained. "Now, how may I be of assistance?"

"I have been told that you are the most knowledgeable person around here." Chief said, hoping to cut to the chase as quickly as possible.

"I don't know about that." Whiscash answered humbly. "However, I suppose it is fair to say I have learned much in my time."

Chief took a moment to gather his thoughts, before sighing and beginning, "What I'm about to explain to you may sound strange. In fact, I doubt you will believe me." Whiscash said nothing, but motioned for him to continue with one of his feelers. "I'm known as Master Chief Petty Officer Sierra-117, and I am not from this world." Chief said determinedly, as Whiscash's eyes widened in surprise. Chief continued, feeling his confidence ebb slightly with each word he spoke. "I come from another world, one in which I was an entirely different species altogether. I was a human, and I through some sort of event, whose cause and origin I can only guess at, I ended up here, as this." He finished gesturing to his body, as Whiscash looked on in amazement. From behind him, Chief heard a gasp, but as he whipped his gaze back to find its source, he saw nothing. He continued scanning the area, until his attention was drawn back to Whiscash clearing his throat softly.

"Well then." Whiscash said, bringing a feeler down to stroke his chin contemplatively. "That is certainly strange, there's no doubt about that. I must admit that I find it hard to believe in your story. I have heard legends regarding humans, but never in my life did I expect to meet one." Chief raised a brow in surprise at this revelation, but said nothing. "Please, why don't you start from the beginning?" Whiscash offered.

"I don't have time for this." Chief thought. Out loud, he said, "There isn't much else to tell. I was in a ship, it was taking off, and the next thing I know, I'm being awoken by a creature I'd never seen before."

Whiscash cocked its head curiously. "Oh? What was this creature you saw?"

"A Totodile." Chief answered with a shrug. "He said his name was Felix."

Whiscash's mouth formed a small 'o' of understanding. "Ah. That explains it then."

Chief frowned confusedly. "Explains what?"

"Why Felix has been spying on us from that bush since you arrived." Whiscash said, chuckling as he gestured to a large bush with one

feeler. Cursing to himself at being discovered, Felix slowly emerged from the bush, blushing and looking down self-consciously.

Glaring at Felix, Chief growled, "What are you doing here? Why were you listening in on us?"

Clearly frightened, Felix answered quickly, "I was curious! I just wanted to know why you were so dead-set on meeting Whiscash Elder. I couldn't help myself!" Felix quailed as Chief's glare continued unabated, but he managed to squeak out, "Is it true?" He asked, his eyes filled with awe as he stared at Chief intently. "Were you really a human before I met you?"

Chief glanced from Felix to Whiscash, who nodded sagely, before returning his gaze to the Totodile and responding, "Yes. When you found me in Tiny Woods, it was the first time I woke up in this world."

Felix gave a small 'wow' at the answer, before replying, "You know, that makes sense. Kinda, anyway. It would explain why you were freaking out in the woods earlier."

"Yes that reminds me." Whiscash interjected, looking to Chief with a scrutinizing gaze. "You mentioned that Felix here was 'something that you'd never seen before.' Have you never encountered Pokémon before?"

Chief nodded. "No. I definitely have never seen anything like Pokémon before, and I have seen a lot." Whiscash turned his gaze down, frowning deeply in thought. When he looked back up at Chief, his expression was grim.

"That's not good." Whiscash explained gravely. "I have heard several legends of humans coming to our world, but none of them speak of a human from a world where Pokémon do not exist. This does not bode well at all."

Chief's brow furrowed in concern. "What do you mean?" He demanded, feeling anxiety well up within him at Whiscash's somber tone.

Whiscash sighed, giving Chief an apologetic stare. "I'm sorry human, but I every legend of humans that I know, it is a Pokémon that leads to them entering our world, usually for the purpose of fulfilling some goal or quest, and it is the same Pokémon that invariably holds the power to send them back."

Chief froze as the weight of Whiscash's words made their impact, and he listened with equal parts anticipation and dread as he continued, "I wish that I were able to help you, human. But unless you find out who brought you to this world and why, you will never be able to return to your own world."

* * *

><p>Author's Note: AW SNAP! Looks like the Chief is trapped in the Pokémon World! How is he gonna handle this one? Well, you're just gonna have to read on to find out! Sorry for the short chapter, but this was the best available stopping point. Kind of a cliffhanger, but oh well. See you all next time, and I hope you enjoyed the

chapter!<p>

6. Resistance

Ch. 6: Resistance

Chief stood frozen, struck dumb as his mind fought to cope with the information he had just received. He was trapped. Stuck in a world separate from his own, by a power that he couldn't identify, for a purpose that was never made clear. A hundred conflicting emotions welled up within him, all screaming that he take action. But for once in his life, Chief was clueless as to what that was. His ingrained response, to simply identify the next objective and do his best to complete it, failed him. There was no objective. He was lost, in every sense of the word.

"â€|Chief?" The quiet, tentative question came from Felix, as the Totodile fixed him with an expression of worry that seemed to emulate the turmoil Chief himself felt. "Chiefâ€| I'm sorry." He said, his sincerity making itself clear in his low tone.

Chief didn't respond. He felt defeated, that if only he had done something, fought harder, that he would still be in his world. He did his best to quell such thoughts, but the sense of helplessness remained. Eventually, he did the only thing he could, turning to Whiscash and asking, "Are you sure that it has to be this way? That there is no way for me to get home?"

Whiscash too, seemed to share in Chief's grief as he answered sadly, "I'm afraid not. You were brought here for a reason human, to fulfill a destiny that only the one who summoned you knows the full extent of. Without them, the only person who could know for sure why you are hereâ€| is you."

Chief looked down, burying the urge to shout in frustration. He didn't know why he was here! He didn't want to be here! He wanted to be where he was needed, back home, protecting Humanity, like he had for as long as he could remember. "I don't know." Chief muttered despondently. "I have no idea why I was brought here."

"Actually, I think I have an idea." Both Chief and Whiscash turned to Felix, who shrunk slightly beneath their focused gazes. "Um, well, I was the first one to find Chief, right? I ran into him in Tiny Woods. Thatâ€| That can't be a coincidence, can it?"

Whiscash brought a feeler down to rub his chin in thought. "That does seem a bit strange. What were you doing in Tiny Woods, Felix?"

Felix looked down, sighing forlornly. "I wasâ€| trying to clear my head. I was mad, and I went to Tiny Woods so I could think. I've never gone there before, but today I justâ€| it seemed like a good idea." Lifting his gaze he looked to Chief with a sharp intensity. "Chief, I don't think me finding you was just a coincidence. I think it was meant to be. Just look at what happened, if we hadn't met, Caterpie would have been Pidgeotto's meal!"

Chief furrowed his brow, uncertain. "Even if that's true, then why?" He asked. "Why send me to you? Just to rescue Caterpie?"

"No Chief, don't you get it?" Felix said excitedly. "This is just the beginning. You and me, Chief, we make a great team. We could become a Rescue Team! What better purpose for you to have been brought here than to save people? It's all I've ever wanted to do!" Felix trailed off, before fixing Chief with an earnest look. Holding a claw out to Chief, he finished, "So what do you say? Partners?"

Chief digested this information for a moment, considering that what Felix said may very well explain why he was brought here. Casting a look over to Whiscash, he found the fish to be nodding pensively, seemingly swayed by Felix's argument. _Is that really why I'm here?_ Chief thought. _To save these people, to become some sort of hero?_ Chief mentally bristled at the thought. Despite what everyone in the UNSC seemed to think of him, Chief didn't see himself as a hero. He recognized his ability, yes, but as far as he was concerned he was just a soldier. He did his duty, his responsibility to the UNSC, fighting because it was all he knew how to do, and saving others because it was his responsibility as a soldier. But thisâ€¦ It was entirely different. He held no obligation to these people. They weren't his own allies, Hell, he'd been attacked by them as often as talked to them.

But one thought remained, a memory, almost long forgotten. _You have been called upon to serve._ The symmetry of his current predicament and his original initiation into the SPARTAN program were clear. But just as he was forced to accept his new life as a Spartan back on Reach, so too would he have to accept the mission given to him here. If that meant that whatever it was that brought him here wanted him to assist Felix in creating a Rescue Team, then so be it.

So, resolved to his fate, Chief nodded firmly, reaching out a blade to meet Felix's claw. Felix took it, and gave it a solid shake. Whiscash watched the two with a smile, before clearing his throat and gaining their attention. "I am quite glad to see you have found your purpose here, human." He explained. "I would be honored to institute you as the newest Rescue Team of PokÃ©mon Square." Felix grinned excitedly, and Chief gave an appreciative nod. "Of course, I just need your team name." Felix's grin faltered, and Chief cocked his head in confusion.

Turning to Chief, Felix scratched the back of his neck embarrassedly. "I, uhh, I kinda don't know what to call our team. Any ideas?"

Chef skeptically raised a brow. "I thought you had been dreaming of this for years?" He said.

Felix groaned, putting his face in his claws and moaning, "Yeah, but I never thought about what to call it! I always thought that, I don't know, my partner would choose it!"

Chief rolled his eyes. "All right, fine. How about Blue Team?" Chief was somewhat loath to give this team the name of his old squad, but it was short, practical, and familiar. To Chief's dismay however, Felix simply responded with a deadpan expression.

"â€¦Blue Team. Really." He said, unmoved. "You can't think of anything better than that?"

Chief frowned. "It's a perfectly viable name. It's simple, easy to remember, and-"

"And _boring!_" Felix snapped. "I mean, even if that wasn't a totally lame name, it makes no sense! Of the two of us, only I'm blue; you're green! Come on, can't you think of anything more creative?"

Chief sighed in exasperation, but decided put some thought to it. _Alright, so I'm being put on a team, to fulfill some duty, which is unnecessarily vague, to save people from a threat that no one knows precisely the origin of._ The answer came to him, bringing a small smile to his face. _Fitting, and a bit of a final "up yours" to Spark._

"Reclaimer." Chief said with finality.

Felix cocked his head curiously, but after a moment, grinned. "That's perfect! It sounds totally cool!"

Seeing that the two were satisfied with their choice, Whiscash smiled. "An excellent name. I hereby dub you Rescue Team Reclaimer, and formally swear you into the Rescue Team Corps. Congratulations." Felix and Chief both thanked the elder, and he nodded graciously, before continuing, "Your gear should arrive at Pelipper Post Office by tomorrow morning. That is, unless you have a base already."

Felix nodded excitedly. "We can use my dad's old base! It's just outside of town."

Whiscash returned the nod, saying, "I know of it. Very well, I'll make the arrangements, and have it delivered tomorrow morning." Felix thanked the elder again, before he, along with Chief, bid him farewell. Whiscash returned the gesture, before slipping back into the pool and out of sight. Motioning for Chief to follow him, Felix turned and began walking back into town.

As Chief and Felix once again entered the Town Square, Felix continued to chatter excitedly. "I can't believe it!" He said, exuberant. "I mean, this is literally a dream come true, Chief! I've been waiting for this day since I first hatched, I swear! Finally I can become a real rescuer!"

Chief, still reflecting on the news delivered to him, found himself cracking a small smile at his partner's delight. "I'm glad you're excited." He said earnestly.

Suddenly realizing that Chief was there next to him, Felix started slightly. "Oh, uh, yeah. Thanks, Chief." Felix blushed in embarrassment as he added, "And don't worry Chief, I promise we'll find out who brought you here and why. If whatever Pokémon brought you here needed you to go from one end of the world to another, then you can guarantee I'll be with you every step of the way!"

Chief looked down at Felix, regarding the Totodile curiously. However, he said nothing, simply returning his gaze forward as the two proceeded out of town. _He's already willing to do that for me?_ Chief thought with confusion. _I get that I'm helping him follow a dream, but such dedication—it's odd, to say the least._ Chief was much more used to soldiers following him out of a desire to increase their odds of survival, rather than an actual desire to assist him. Looking down to Felix, Chief felt a small grin forming on his face as he regarded his new companion. _Whatever the reason, you won't hear

me complaining._

Within minutes, the two had reached the abandoned base, and Chief regarded it with a new outlook. _So this will be our base._ Chief thought. _It could do with a few additions, but it's definitely far from unusable._ Looking from the base to Felix, he saw his partner was observing the building with a sense of reverence.

Turning to Chief, Felix fixed him with an apologetic look. "Well, I guess I'll be heading home now. Um, I don't know if my parents would be okay with you staying over." He explained, keeping his gaze firmly on Chief's feet, afraid of his reaction. "There's a bed in the base, so I was wondering if you'd have a problem with-"

"It's fine." Chief said, raising a blade to silence him. "I understand. Go home, and I'll see you tomorrow. Get here bright and early, understand?"

Felix grinned, snapping a claw up into a crisp salute. "Yes Sir!" He said, turning and heading down a path, opposite the one leading into town. He took a moment to look back over his shoulder and shouted, "I'll see you tomorrow!" before he continued home, growing smaller and smaller as he approached the horizon.

Chief watched him leave, before facing the base and walking inside. As he entered the structure, he took a moment to observe the room within. It was circular, in keeping with the shape of its exterior, and to Chief's surprise sported a very natural appearance. The floor was covered in a soft bed of grass, and on the other side of the room a small pond curved along the opposite wall. Against the back wall, a large grate had been formed, feeding the pond into the larger one outside. In the water but connected to the grassy floor was a large stone slab, patterned like a turtle shell and clearly meant to act as a bed. On the grass, two small ponds formed on the left and right side of the room, near its center. The left was in the shape of a crescent moon, while the right was more oblong in shape, and sported a small waterfall. All throughout the room, small shrubs and plants were flourishing in the aquatic setting, and overall Chief compared it to a Zen garden, minus the sand.

His analysis complete, Chief approached the bed and knelt down. He took a breath, and for the first time since arriving in this world, allowed himself to rest. All at once, the fatigue and tension from the last few hours hit him full force. The doubts, the worries, the pain from his injuries all converged upon him, and he accepted them gladly. He began the arduous task of recovery, mentally sorting each lingering thought and setting it aside. His fear at his new form was removed with a promise to practice with his new body later. His horror at being on a different world, separated from the UNSC and surrounded by unfamiliar places and species was appeased by the knowledge that come Hell or high water, he would find a way back home.

Eventually, the only pain sapping Chief's strength was that from his injuries, and even that had dulled slightly as time had passed. Clambering to his feet, Chief leaned over the water to take in his reflection. He quickly skimmed over his new, alien features in favor of inspecting the wound on his chest. To his surprise, it had healed a great deal in the short time since he had escaped the Mystery Dungeon. The bleeding had long since been staunched, and the cracked

and torn exoskeleton was already showing signs of knitting itself back together. Not resenting this strange turn in the slightest, Chief stepped back from the pool and lowered himself down onto the bed. _PokÃ©mon must heal at a faster rate than humans._ Chief mused. Sitting down and resting his blades on his knees, Chief sighed wearily and allowed his eyes to droop shut.

* * *

><p>Felix crept into the den as quietly as possible, silently praying that he could spontaneously become a Ghost Type, if it would allow him to avoid this confrontation. Unfortunately for him, his talents in stealth were less than adequate, and a small misstep sent a rock clattering through the cave. Crap! Felix thought, cursing with each sound the accursed stone made.

"Honey? Is that you?" A sudden voice caused Felix to groan aloud, as a large shape stepped out from one of the branching pathways. At first glance, it was very similar to Felix himself, but much larger. The Feraligatr locked its scarlet eyes on Felix, its gaze shifting from one of curiosity to one of joy. "Oh, Felix!" She said, striding forward and wrapping the Totodile up in her massive embrace. "I was so worried! I'd been looking for you all day, I even sent your father out to find you!"

Felix squirmed in his mother's grasp, groaning, "Aw, c'mon Mom! I'm fine, leggo!"

His mother complied, slowly lowering him to the floor, and looking him over with a critical eye. As she noticed the many bruises and scratches that swathed the Totodile's form, her enormous maw dropped open in shock. "Oh my goodness!" She exclaimed, reaching for him again. "My poor baby! What happened to you?"

Dodging away from his mother's reach, Felix growled, "It's nothing, Mom. I'm fine! Really! I just, I kinda got into a little fight, okay? It's nothing."

"A fight?" Felix's mother said incredulously. "You call that nothing? Look at you! You're a mess! Was it that Ekans boy? Did he beat you up again?"

Felix gave an exasperated moan. "Mom, I haven't talked to Ekans in years."

His mother tutted softly. "And I'm so thankful for that. It seemed like every day I would have to go find a Pecha Berry after you got into fights with him."

Felix huffed indignantly. "Hey, poisoned or not, I always came out the winner in our fights!"

His mother gently laid a claw on his head, smiling warmly. "I know. Your father may have been proud of you, but I was beside myself! I never want to see my baby hurt." She trailed a claw down his cheek, causing Felix to smile in return despite himself. Her expression growing stern, Felix's mother continued, "So if you weren't in a fight, then what happened?"

Felix looked away, searching for an excuse. "I, well, I never said I

didn't-

"He was in a Mystery Dungeon." Both Felix and his mother turned to find another Feraligatr tromping his way into the cave. Felix flinched as his mother's jaw dropped, and she turned her shocked gaze from the Feraligatr to Felix. The new Feraligatr, drawing up to the two and looking down at Felix with a firm gaze. Felix slowly brought his head up to meet it, but said nothing in return. Instead, the Feraligatr continued, "You entered a Mystery Dungeon, fought your way to the end, defeated an insane Pidgeotto, and almost died in the process." The Feraligatr lapsed into silence, as Felix did his best to keep from quivering under his scrutinizing gaze. Suddenly, the Feraligatr lunged forward, and Felix felt himself wrapped in a hug, as the Feraligatr squeezed him in a crushing grip. "Son, I am _so_ proud of you!"

"What!?" Felix and his mother said, staring dumbfounded at the exuberant father. Felix's mother stepped forward. "Ford, you can't be serious!" She exclaimed, admonishing her mate. "He went into a Mystery Dungeon? He could have died!"

"But he _didn't_, _Farrah." Ford said, setting Felix down and tousling his head fins. "He went in, he kicked some tail, and he saved Caterpie!"

Farrah blinked confusedly. "Caterpie?" Turning to Felix, she added, "You mean you actually _rescued_ someone!?"

Felix grinned excitedly. "Yeah! Caterpie fell down a fissure, and Butterfree couldn't get past the feral Pok  mon to help him, so me and Chief-

"Actually," Ford cut him off, saying, "I'd like to hear more about this "Chief" person. Butterfree was pretty vague in who he was. All she could tell me was that he's a Scyther."

Farrah too regarded Felix curiously. "What does he mean? Who is Chief?"

Felix looked from his mother to his father, struggling to come up with a viable explanation. _Oh yeah, I met this Scyther who it turns out is actually a human, and we formed a Rescue Team together! I know we just met, but it's his destiny!_ _Yeah sure, that'll go over well._ Deciding to simply downplay the specifics of his and Chief's meeting, he began, "I found a Pok  mon, unconscious in Tiny Woods. I woke him up, and I think he may have lost his memory. He couldn't remember where he was or how he got there, but he said his name was Master Chief, and asked me to take him to see Whiscash Elder."

Ford stroked his chin thoughtfully. "That seems suspicious." He said. "But how did that lead to him helping you rescue Caterpie?"

Unnerved by his father's suspicion of Chief's motives, he continued carefully, "Well, Butterfree showed up then, crying about how Caterpie fell into a fissure." Felix took a moment to regard his parents' attentive looks, and decided to omit Chief's reluctance in joining him in the first place. "We went in after him, but when we followed him in, we found out that the fissure actually led to a Mystery Dungeon."

Again Ford interjected, scowling. "Another one?" He growled. "And out in Tiny Woods too? Damn, we'll need to warn the rest of the town about that, or more kids will be winding up in that Dungeon pretty soon." Shaking his head, Ford refocused his attention on Felix, gesturing for him to continue.

"Right." Felix said, nodding, "So Chief and I fought our way through the Dungeon. You should have seen us, dad! We fought a couple Pidgey, and I fought a Sunkern, and we even fought a crazy Pidgeotto! He sounded just a day or two away from feral, and tried to eat Caterpie! But Chief and I, we went in there, and we beat him good! First he was all 'Rawr!' and we were like 'Hiyah!' and-"

"Alright baby, I think we get it." Farrah said, smiling at her son's enthusiasm. Felix gave a small, embarrassed chuckle, relaxing from the fighting stance he had taken. Farrah rested a claw on her son's shoulder and continued, "Your father and I are very proud that you were able to save Caterpie, but you could have been seriously hurt! What if something had happened to you?"

Felix huffed, frowning sternly. "I couldn't just do nothing! Besides, Chief was with me, it wasn't like I was alone. In fact, we made an amazing team!"

Farrah's expression softened at that, and Ford smiled proudly. Farrah's frown failed to disappear however, as she asked, "But what happened after you saved Caterpie? Where's Chief now?"

Felix sighed, as the conversation moved into territory he knew his parents would be less than pleased with. "Well, he needed to go see Whiscash Elder, so I took him into town. Then we kindaâ€¦ formed a Rescue Team together!" Felix muttered quickly, wincing as both his parents' massive jaws dropped open in surprise.

"Aâ€¦ A Rescue Team?" Farrah stuttered, while Ford continued to work his jaw wordlessly. "Honey, that'sâ€¦ quite a big step. Are you sure that it was the right decision? I know you've been wanting to form a Team, Felix. But to create one with someone you just metâ€¦"

Felix looked away, again fighting to put together a feasible answer, knowing full well that saying 'it was destiny' was most likely going to result in dubious expressions.

So, steeling himself, he answered, "I formed a team with him because I saw him fight. He was incredible, guys! He was cutting through those other PokÃ©mon like they were nothing! I've been waiting for someone strong enough to become part of a Rescue Team with me, and now I've finally found one!"

Ford finally recovered from his shock enough to ask, "And he just accepted it, just like that?"

Felix shook his head. "Well, no. Not at first, at least. He still wanted to meet with Whiscash elder. But after he didâ€¦ Well, he said that he was here to stay." Felix lied. "He formed a Rescue Team with me then, so I led him to your old base and-"

Ford perked up in interest. "What, that old run-down thing?" Ford put a claw to his chin in thought. "Hmm, that's not a bad idea. It's close to town, and I'm sure with a little attention it'll be

comfortable enough."

Farrah looked to Ford with surprise. "Wait a minute! Ford, Darling, you can't be encouraging this! He's just a child! Our child! And we know nothing about this Chief personâ€|"

Ford chuckled in response. "Relax, Honey. You know that I wasn't any older than he was when I joined my own team. Besides, if this Chief was willing to go into a Mystery Dungeon to help Felix save Caterpie, he can't be all bad." Throwing an arm over his mate's shoulder, he added, "Tell you what. Tomorrow, Felix can take me to meet this Chief, and I'll be able to judge him for myself." Looking to Felix, he added, "Does that sound fair to everyone?"

Felix nodded rapidly. "Sure!" He chirped. Farrah hesitated, before finally nodding as well.

Ford grinned. "It's settled then. Felix, tomorrow, you'll take me to meet Chief, and I'll judge whether he's up to being a part of a Rescue Team with you." Walking over to his son, he plucked him from the ground and continued, "For now though, you need to get some sleep. Trust me, I know how much those Dungeons can take out of you."

Felix was about to argue, before his jaw opened and he released a massive yawn. Embarrassed he muttered an affirmative, and allowed his father to carry him to bed.

* * *

><p>Chief stirred, his eyes shooting open as he leapt to his feet. All around him was a swirling vortex of constantly shifting colors, one that tugged at the corners of his mind, yet remained out of his reach. I know this place. Chief thought sluggishly. _But from where?_

Suddenly, a new figure appeared before him, faintly flickering in and out of existence. Chief focused on it, but was unable to make it out, its indistinct form remaining just beyond the reach of his vision. A voice, barely audible, began speaking. Chief did his best to make it out, but its words were muted, and Chief's mind began to grow fuzzy from the attempt.

"Who are you?" He demanded, shouting out to the figure and struggling through the haze within his mind. "Where am I?"

The figure didn't respond, and instead its already indistinct form began to waver, slowly fading altogether. "Wait! Stop!" Chief called, reaching out towards it with one of his blades. "Don't go!"

The figure gave no inclination that it had heard him, instead disappearing altogether, but not before Chief heard one word, screaming at him in an all too familiar voice.

"_CHIEF!_"

* * *

><p>Chief's eyes snapped open, and he stumbled to his feet, his eyes wild and his chest heaving. Staggering over to the pond's edge, he

plunged his head into the cold water. Pulling back, he panted heavily, a single word upon his lips.<p>

"_Cortana._"

End
file.